Sharps Collection in Massachusetts:

The challenge of
"the needles law"

- DPH and DEP are committed to working cooperatively with all communities, recognizing and solving the difficulties we share in implementing a statewide sharps collection network

- New law
- July Enactment
- Veto – Override
- Emergency Preamble
- New deadlines

- Intent of the statute – Reduce incidence of HIV/AIDS / Hep C

- OTC sale of needles – 9/18/06

■ "DEP and DPH in conjunction with other relevant state and local agencies and government departments shall design, establish and implement…"

- EPA's revised policy recommendation – needles out of the waste stream.

- Waste Management's employees are vulnerable to needle sticks – 3% are stuck annually!

- Educational insert accompanying the sale of OTC needles - mini challenge

- Transition Period

- Not disposal prohibitions but recommendations

■ Statute lays out the options:
  – Medical Facilities

  – Pharmacies

  – Municipal Facilities – Including fire stations, police stations and public health offices

  – Senior Centers –medically necessary needles

  – Mailbacks as approved by US Postal Service

■ We are exploring all options.
  – Survey all cities and towns
  – Coalition for Local Public Health
  – Medical waste disposal companies
  – Prepaid mailback services
  – Pharmacies
  – National Coalition for the Safe disposal of Needles
  – Product Stewardship

- We are interested in identifying and facilitating the most cost-effective approach.

- OSD's Contract for Hazardous Material and Medical Waste Collection and Disposal offers favorable rates.

■ We have applied for an EPA grant that if successful, would provide additional resources for work on a range of disposal issues.

- We with DEP are in the planning phase of regulatory development.
- We fully realize that it will take time to establish sharps collection sites.
- Implementation of the anticipated ban on sharps disposal in household waste or recyclables will be delayed for a phased – in approach to sharp regulation.
- Cooperative planning and development is our approach.